

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2452

INFO NACC COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 4863

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PORG IN IZ

SUBJECT: NACC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING: ON THE EVE OF THE CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: AS DELEGATIONS CONTINUE TO ARRIVE IN NEW DELHI FOR THE NACC FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE WHICH OPENS AT THE OFFICIAL LEVEL APRIL 6 AND FORMALLY APRIL 7, THE MOST NOTICEABLE DEVELOPMENT TO DATE IS THE TIGHT CONTROL THE INDIANS ARE EXERCISING OVER CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS AND AGENDA. THEIR EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT COMMUNIQUE BY LATE DISTRUBUTION OF THE DOCUMENT, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO HAVE FAILED. DELEGATION LEADERS HAVE BEEN NON-COMMITAL IN THEIR ARRIVAL STATEMENTS, EXCEPT FOR THE IRAQUI WHO STATED THAT HE WOULD PRESENT AN " ACTION PAPER" TO THE CONFERENCE WHICH WOULD TREAT POLITICAL SUBJECTS SUCH AS THE INDIAN OCEAN AND "IMPERIALIST" ATTEMPTS TO TOPPLE DEMOCRATIC REGIMES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND GREETINGS TO ARRIVING DELEGATIONS, INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE IS STRESSING THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE MEETING. FOREIGN SECRETARY JAGAT MEHTA IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ECHOED THIS THEME AND ATTEMPTED TO SIDESTEP QUESTIONS ON THE "DEMILI-TARIZATION" OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND AN OIL EMBARGO ON
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FRANCE. THE GOI HAS NAMED A LARGE, HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE, INCLUDING TWO CONTROVERSIAL MEMBERS OF THE NEWLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENT.
END SUMMARY.

1. ARRANGEMENTS: THE INDIANS ARE EXERCISING TIGHT CONTROL OVER THE CONFERENCE. THE DRAFT AGENDA WAS ONLY DISTRIBUTED

TO NAM MEMBERS IN DELHI LATE IN THE MORNING OF APRIL 5. A BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER WHO VISITED VIGYAN BHAVAN, THE CONFERENCE SITE, DURING THE DAY FOUND VIRTUALLY NO ACTIVITY. PRAKASH SHAH, THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT DIRECTOR, TOLD HIM THAT THE GOI DID NOT INTEND TO RELEASE TO THE DELEGATES THE DETAILS OF "OUR PROGRAM" FOR THE CONFERENCE-- INCLUDING EVEN THE SOCIAL SCHEDULE-- UNTIL THE EVENING OF APRIL 6. THE GOI IS ALSO STRICTLY CONTROLLING ACCESS TO VIGYAN BHAVAN. ONLY DELEGATES AND JOURNALISTS ALREADY ACCREDITED TO THE GOI WILL BE ADMITTED. ACCORDING TO SHAH, DIPLOMATS OF NAM COUNTRIES RESIDENT IN DELHI WILL ALSO BE EXCLUDED UNLESS THEY ARE ACTUALLY DESIGNATED MEMBERS OF THEIR COUNTRIES' DELEGATIONS. SHAH SEID THAT NON- DELEGATION DIPLOMATS IN DELHI WOULD NOT HAVE ACCESS EVEN TO THE PRESS ROOM AT THE CONFERENCE SITE. HE SUGGESTED TO OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUE WHO ASKED ABOUT OBTAINING CONFERENCE PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, THAT HE ASK A "FRIENDLY INDIAN JOURNALIST" TO PICK UP EXTRA COPIES FOR HIM.

2. IT SEEMS CLEAR THE THE INDIAN'S CLOSE CONTROL OF CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS IS INDICATIVE OF THEIR DESIRE TO RUN AS SOMOOTH A CONFERENCE AS POSSIBLE AND TO MINIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTENTIOUS ISSUES OR FORMULATIONS TO ARISE. TOWARD THAT END, THEY ONLY DISTRIBUTED THE DRAFT COMMUNIQUE LATE ON APRIL 5. IN CONVERSATION WITH ACTING POLCOUNSELOR AND USUN OFFICER APRIL 6, INDIA'S UN REP AMBASSADOR JAIPAL DESCRIBED THE DRAFT COMMUNIQUE AS AN EFFORT TO FORMULATE A "LEAST COMMON DENOMINATOR" APPROACH WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL
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MEMBERS OF THE NACC. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, "HUNDREDS" OF AMENDMENTS ARE ALREADY POURING IN AND THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE IS LIKELY TO BEAR LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE ORIGINAL DRAFT. THE THREE NAM LEADERS-- THE INDIANS, THE SRILANKANS AND THE YUGOSLAVS--REPORTEDLY MET AS PLANNED APRIL 4 TO REVIEW PLANS FOR THE CONFERENCE. WE ALSO HAVE AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT THE CUBANS JOINED IN THESE CONSULTATIONS, PRESUMABLY IN THEIR ROLE AS PROSPECTIVE HOSTS OF THE 1979 NAM SUMMIT IN HAVANA. SEVERAL NAM SOURCES HAVE COMMENTED TO US ALREADY THAT THE CUBANS ARE HERE IN FORCE AND ARE VERY ACTIVE.

3. THERE IS STILL CONFUSION AMONG DELEGATES RESIDENT IN DELHI AS TO WHEN THE OFFICIAL LEVEL MEETINGS APRIL 6 WILL COMMENCE, ALTHOUGH THE AFTERNOON IS THE LIKELY TIME. THE CONFERENCE WILL BE FORMALLY OPENED BY INDIAN PRIME MINISTER MORARJI DESAI AT 9:30 A.M. APRIL 7. THE OPENING SESSION IS BILLED AS "PUBLIC" BUT ATTENDANCE BY NON-DELEGATE DIPLNXATS IS LIMITED TO CHIEFS

OF RESIDENT MISSIONS ONLY. THE INDIANS ARE SCHEDULING EVENING SESSIONS FOR APRIL 7 AND 8, BUT THE CONFERENCE SUPPOSEDLY WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM NOON OF APRIL 9 TO THE EVENING OF APRIL 10 SO THAT DELEGATES MAY ACCEPT THE INDIAN OFFER OF EXCURSIONS TO KASHMIR AND AGRA. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD, WITH THE MORE MILITANT DELEGATIONS IN PARTICULAR IN ATTENDANCE. THE INDIANS HAVE PLANNED THAT THE EVENING SESSION ON APRIL 11 BEGIN AT SIX P.M. AND CONTINUE ALL NIGHT IF NECESSARY TO CONCLUDE THE CONFERENCE ON SCHEDULE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 4863

4. DELEGATIONS: DELEGATIONS WERE STILL ARRIVING IN NEW DELHI THROUGHOUT APRIL 5. PRESS COVERAGE OF THESE ARRIVALS HAS BEEN PERFUNCTORY FOR THE MOST PART. THE ONE SUBSTANTIVE ARRIVAL STATEMENT REPORTED WAS THAT OF IRAQI MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAMID ALWAN. ALWAN SAID THAT IRAQ HAD PREPARED FOR THE CONFERENCE A DETAILED "ACTION PAPER" WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THE ROLE OF THE NAM IN DEALING WITH SUCH SUBJECTS AS THE INDIAN OCEAN, "IMPERIALIST ATTEMPTS" AT TOPPLING DEMOCRATIC REGIMES IN ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE "UNHOLLY ALLIANCE BETWEEN ZIONISM AND RACIST REGIMES IN AFRICA". THE ACTION PAPER, HE SAID, WAS ALSO INTENDED TO HELP THE NON-ALIGNED OVERCOME THE OBSTACLE IMPEDING ITS PROGRAMS OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COOPERATION. CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA LIMITED HIS REMARKS TO STATING THAT THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE CONCERNED WITH IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE COLOMBO SUMMIT AND WITH FINDING WAYS TO MAKE THE NACC ITSELF

MORE ACTIVE.

5. INDIAN ATTITUDE: IN HIS WELCOMING STATEMENTS TO ARRIVING DELEGATIONS AND IN A RADIO ADDRESS APRIL 4, INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE HAS BEEN STRESSING THE "CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE" THAT THE GOI ATTACHES TO DISCUSSIONS
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OF ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AT THE NACC MEETING AND THE NEED FOR THE NAM TO FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT FIRMLY A PROGRAM FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL 5, FOREIGN SECRETARY JAGAT MEHTA ALSO EMPHASIZED THIS THEME AND ATTEMPTED TO SKIRT QUESTIONS ON POLITICAL TOPICS. ASKED ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER' " RECENT PROPOSAL FOR DEMILITARIZATION" OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, MEHTA REPORTEDLY SAID THAT, "IF THIS IS A MOVE TOWARDS DEMILITARIZATION IT COMES VERY CLOSE TO OURS. IN THAT CASE WE WELCOME IT. BUT WE HAVE TO SEE HOW IT DEVELOPS." IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION REGARDING THE COLOMBO-PROPOSED OIL EMBARGO AGAINST FRANCE, MEHTA SAID THAT THE RECOMMENDATION SHOWED THE STRONG FEELING HELD IN THE NAM AGAINST THE RACIAL POLICIES OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES AND HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SUBJECT COMING UP FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE DELHI MEETING. MEHTA SAID THAT SPECIFIC SUBJECTS WOULD BE DISCUSSED INCLUDING SOUTHERN AFRICA, CYPRUS, WEST ASIA, THE ARMS RACE AND DISARMAMENT AND THE PROGRESS OF DETENTE ON A WORLD- WIDE BASIS. THE NEW DELHI MEETING, HE SAID, WOULD REVIEW THESE TOPICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPECIAL UN SESSION NEXT YEAR ON DISARMAMENT. HE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON WHO WOULD REPLACE MOHAMMED YUNIS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE NON- ALIGNED PRESS POOL (YUNIS, A CONFIDENT OF MRS. GANDHI, RESIGNED FROM HIS OFFICIAL POSITION WITH SAMCHAR, THE INDIAN NEWS AGENCY, AFTER THE ELECTION.)

6. THE GOI HAS ALSO NAMED ITS DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE. VAJPAYEE WILL LEAD THE DELEGATION AND TWO OTHER MINISTERS HAVE BEEN NAMED AS ALTERNATED LEADERS: LABOR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER RAVINDRA VARMA AND COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER GEORGE FERNANDES. THREE MP'S ARE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION AS WELL: MRS. SUMITRA KULKARNI, YADAVENDRA DUTT DUBE, AND SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY. (FERNANDES AND SWAMY ARE OUTSPOKEN POLITICIANS. FERNANDES IS A FIREBRAND SOCIALIST AND LABOR LEADER WHO CALLED THE 1974
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RAILROAD STRIKE AND WHO WAS UNDER TRIAL FOR ATTEMPTING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT BY FORCE WHEN HE WAS ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT IN MARCH; THE CHARGES WERE THEN DROPPED. SWAMY, A COMBRIDGE AND HARVARD EDUCATED ECONOMIST, A CONSERVATIVE AND STERN CRITIC OF MRS. GANDHI ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE, WAS EXPELLED FROM THE UPPER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT IN 1976, SLIPPED ABROAD EVENTUALLY TO THE UNITED STATES AND RETURNED TO INDIA TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS.) SENIOR GOI OFFICIALS ON THE DELEGATION INCLUDE FONSEC MEHTA; M.A. VELLODI AND V.K. AHUJA, SECRETARIES IN THE MEA; RIKKI JAIPAL, UN PERMREP; MANMOHAN SINGH, SECRETARY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE FINANCE MINISTRY; P.C. ALEXANDER, FOREIGN TRADE SECRETARY; S.M.H. BURNEY, SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING. N.P. JAIN, MEA JOINT SECRETARY, IS SECRETARY TO THE DELEGATION.
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Message Attributes

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